

addressed to Osiris contain allusions to this important side of his nature. In one of them it is said that the world waxes green in triumph through him ; and another declares, " Thou art the father and mother of mankind, they live on thy breath, they subsist on the flesh of thy body."¹ We may conjecture that in this paternal aspect he was supposed, like other gods of fertility, to bless men and women with offspring, and that the processions at his festival were intended to promote this object as well as to quicken the seed in the ground. It would be to misjudge ancient religion to denounce as lewd and profligate the emblems and the ceremonies which the Egyptians employed for the purpose of giving effect to this conception of the divine power. The ends which they proposed to themselves In these rites were natural and laudable ; only the means adopted to compass them were mistaken. A similar fallacy induced the Greeks to adopt a like symbolism In their Dionysiac festivals, and the superficial but striking resemblance thus produced between the two religions has perhaps more than anything else misled inquirers, both ancient and modern, into identifying worships which, though certainly akin in nature, are perfectly distinct and independent In origin.²

§ 4. Osiris a God of the Dead

We have seen that in one of his aspects Osiris was the AS god of ruler and judge of the dead.³ To a people like the Egyptians, Q^esⁱr^{^m} who not only believed in a life beyond the grave but actually came to b³ spent much of their time, labour, and money in preparing Jhe^{^c}culi for it, this office of the god must have appeared

hardly, if the resu-
at all, less important than his function of making
the earth
to bring forth Its fruits In due season. We
may assume
that in the faith of his worshippers the two provinces
of the

pare R. V. Lanzone, *Dhionario di* nothing but a slightly
disguised form *Alitologia Egizia*, taw. cclxxi., cclxxii., of the Egyptian Osiris has
been held cclxxvi., cclxxxv., cclxxxvi., cclxxxvii., by Herodotus in ancient and
by Mr. cclxxxix., ccxc. ; E. A. Wallis Budtje, P. Foucart in modern
times. See *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 132, Herodotus, ii. 49 ; P.
Foucart, *L& *36y^r37^r* *c-nlte (fa Dionysos en Attique*
(Paris,
¹ Miss Margaret A. Murray, 77/6- 1904) *{MEmoires dc*
FAcadJuie des
Osiricioti at Abydos, p. 27. *Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xxxvii.).
- That the Greek Dionysus was ³ Above, pp. 13 sy.
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